

Section 3.32
Section 5.17
Issued April 2004
Amended May 2005
Amended November 2005
Amended January 2006
Updated January 2008

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE**

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Title:

**Emergency Approval of
Family and Friends as Foster Carers
for Specific Children**

1. SUMMARY

This procedure describes the action to be taken to approve a family member or friend as a foster carer when a child needs to be looked after in an emergency.

2. LINKED PROCEDURES AND DOCUMENTS

Recruitment, Approval & Review of Foster Carers – Section 5.15

Approval of Family & Friends as Foster Carers for Specific Children – Section 5.16

Specialist Foster Carer Recruitment, Approval & Review – Section 5.18

Medicals for Foster Carers – Section 5.19

Fostering Panels – Section 5.20

Register of Foster Carers – Section 5.21

**3. LEGISLATION AND
STANDARDS**

Children Act 1989.

Care Standards Act 2000.

Fostering Services - National Minimum Standards and Fostering Services Regulations 2002.

NFCA UK National Standards for Foster Care 1999.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

General Manager (Child Placement)

Fostering Service Managers

Fostering Workers

Service Managers
Social Workers

5. ACTION

Criteria for Placement

- *When the local authority is required to look after a child in an emergency, first consideration should be given to a family member or friend undertaking that care providing this is practicable and consistent with the child's welfare.*
- *Any decision that a child needs to be looked after by the authority must be made on child care grounds, and must not be made on the grounds of income maintenance.*
- *When a child is to be placed with family or friend foster carers, a decision must be made about whether the placement will be permanent or time limited.*

Assessment

- *The responsible Social Worker will visit and interview the potential carers. The Social Worker will obtain information about all other persons living in the household and inspect the accommodation.*
- *The Social Worker will prepare a written report containing the information required according to the pro forma at Appendix 1 (this satisfies Schedule 3 of the Fostering Services Regulations 2002).*
- *The carers will complete a Foster Carer Application Form (Appendix 2)(**not to be used in conjunction with ICS**).*

Checks

- *The Social Worker will immediately undertake the following checks for all adults in the household –*
 - *the local Family Protection Unit to identify whether any offences have been committed by any member of the household which would contra-indicate a placement.*
 - *Central Database.*
 - *Criminal Record Bureau checks to be instigated.*
- *The carers will provide names of 2 referees and the Social Worker will visit and interview these referees.*

Approval

- *The Social Worker will submit the written report to the Fostering Service Manager or General Manager - Child Placement, for consideration for emergency approval.*
- *When approved, the carers will complete a placement agreement with the local authority detailing their duties and responsibilities, using the LAC forms. The Social*

Worker will also ask the carers to sign the Foster Carer Agreement.

- *Approval of emergency placement may be granted for up to 6 weeks only.*
- *The Social Worker will present a written report to Fostering Panel (Appendix 3) within this period unless the child will definitely leave the placement before the end of the emergency approval.*
- *Panel will set a timescale for a full assessment and will monitor this process.*
- *The Fostering Service Manager will allocate this assessment to a fostering worker.*
- *The Social Worker will see the child during the first week and then in line with regulations and will place a written report of the visit on the child's file.*

Payments

- *The Social Worker must submit a completed Care Centre Form via the Fostering Service Manager on granting of emergency approval and a Change of Circumstances Form in order to trigger fostering payments.*
- *Payment will be made at normal fostering allowance rates.*

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Emergency Approval Application
Appendix 2	Foster Carer Application Form – (Not to be used in conjunction with ICS).
Appendix 3	Application to Panel for interim approval

7. COMPLIANCE TO EQUALITIES

“North Yorkshire County Council is committed to equality and to making fair and equitable treatment an integral part of all we do. We will take action to identify and eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practices, which act as barriers to achieving this objective. We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex or gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, or any condition or requirement which places a person at a disadvantage and cannot be objectively justified”.

The full text of the Equalities Policy statement can be found on the Intranet or be obtained from the Corporate Personnel Policy Unit at County Hall, Northallerton.

8. DISTRIBUTION

North Yorkshire County Council's intranet

SCHEDULE 3, Regulation 27

Report requesting Emergency Approval of Family and Friends as Foster Carers for specific named children

The following report must be prepared and sent to the local Service Manager (Fostering) before an Emergency Approval of a Family and Friend Foster Carer can be granted. Under Regulation 27, an Emergency Approval once given cannot last for more than 6 weeks. During the 6 weeks, any significant changes (eg address, household composition, relationships, sleeping arrangements or CRB status) must be reported to the Service Manager (Fostering) immediately. Within that 6 weeks, the case (with an update report, see Appendix 3) must be presented at Foster Carer Panel if there is a need to continue the approval for a longer period (known as an Interim Approval).

1. Basic Details

List full name(s), address(es) and date(s) of birth of applicants and of the child/ren they are applying to care for.

2. Family Structure

List names, dates of birth/ages, relationship to child and address/whereabouts of all relevant family members/friends who are to be mentioned in the report. List all children of the applicant(s), whether or not members of the household. Children over 16 in the household need to be included in all statutory checks (see 12 below).

3. Other Household Members

Give names and dates of birth of any other adults/over 16s in the household, and include them in statutory checks (See 12 below).

4. Background

Briefly describe the background to the case, focusing particularly on the reasons the child/ren is/are (to be) looked after and the events leading to application for Emergency Approval. Include the applicant(s)' relationship to the child/ren and level/quality of contact to date.

5. Health

Apparent state of health of each applicant, and their comments regarding their health and fitness. Also ascertain their willingness to undergo full medical as a mandatory part of becoming a Foster Carer (Medical normally done at the Form F stage unless any health concerns arising at this stage).

6. Accommodation

Give details of the applicant(s)' accommodation, including number of bedrooms and proposed sleeping arrangements for this child/ren. Also length of time in accommodation and whether owned or rented (and any issues re landlord agreeing to foster placement). If this placement is to be anything other than a short term arrangement (less than 4 months) approval will not be given unless there is sufficient space and privacy in the house for the foster child/ren and all other children of the household (the same standard as would apply to mainstream Fostering applicants).

7. Relationships

Include marital status of each applicant, and details/timescales of their current and previous relationships. Comment on perceived stability of current relationship. Also include details of any children of the applicant(s), whether living with them or not, and quality of relationship/contact.

8. Parenting Capacity

Summary of parenting/childcare experience with own or other children, and level of current involvement. Include his/her skills, competence and potential relevant to his/her capacity to care for this child/ren if placed. Details and outcome of any previous application by carer/s or household members to foster or adopt children, for NYCC or any other agency, or for Child-minding or Day Care approval.

9. Involvement with this child/ability to protect

Details of experience to date of caring for this child/ren (if applicable). Comment on ability to place the child/children's needs and safety above other (eg extended family) loyalties. Include the views of the applicant(s)' own children (if any) on the proposed placement of this child.

10. Personality and Family Lifestyle

Brief description of personality of each applicant, indicating strengths and weaknesses as prospective Foster Carers.

Also detail each applicant's racial origin, cultural and linguistic background and capacity to care for a child/children from a different background (if applicable).

11. Employment and Interests

Details of past and present employment, including approximate hours and working patterns (current and proposed) for each applicant. Also comment on standard of living ie any financial issues or difficulties which could impact on their ability to care for this child/ren.

Describe each applicant's main leisure activities and interests. Consider any positives these may offer this child/ren, and also any limits on availability of the Carer (for time-intensive interests).

12. Statutory Checks and References (on prospective Carer/s and other household members or staying visitors over 16 years).

Details of at least verbal (Family Protection Unit) police checks and Central Database checks carried out, and the findings. Written Criminal Records Bureau checks should also always be started off before placement. All positive Police and CRB checks (and a risk assessment report) must be passed to the Assistant Director

(Children's Social Care) and written permission obtained for proceeding with the application.

Applicants should be asked to provide the names and addresses of 2 personal referees (not blood relatives) who would be willing to be written to and interviewed regarding the applicants' suitability as foster carers. At the Emergency Approval stage, interviewing is not necessary unless the Social Worker has issues that it may be helpful to hear from the referees about. Normally referees will only need to be interviewed as part of the update report to panel within 6 weeks.

13. The Plan for the Child/ren

Brief description of current and proposed level of contact between child/ren and birth parents/other significant family members. Consider also the applicant(s)' attitude to contact and ability to facilitate/manage contact as applicable.

Summarise the Social Work Plan for the child/ren and any contingency plan. If the plan is rehabilitation to parents, include anticipated timescales.

14. Plan and Timescales for this Placement

Indicate when the approval would commence, and when this child/children will start or has started to live with the applicants (if different dates). Also indicate both start and end dates of approval if this is a fixed term Emergency Approval eg to cover a holiday. If the child/ren may need long term care away from his/her parents, include the applicant(s)' views and willingness to care for the children on a long term basis.

Include whether a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order application from these applicants as parties to Care Proceedings has been discussed with the applicants, and their initial responses. Indicate whether a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order should be pursued in this case, or alternatively whether this child/ren's long term needs would be better met by Adoption or Permanent Fostering. Residence and Guardianship both offer the applicants some Parental Responsibility and hence can provide greater security and normality in many situations. However, if the nature of the family is such that the applicants would be unable to handle family contacts and pressures from the birth parents or others, Permanent Fostering should be considered. If the plan becomes Permanent Fostering by the applicants, a Fostering Worker would carry out a Form F2 Assessment of the applicants and present this to Foster Carer Panel.

*NB Longer term plans can only be addressed as far as is practicable at the Emergency Approval stage, according to how much information is available to the Social Worker.

15. Recommendations

State clearly whether in your professional opinion the named applicants are suitable to be Emergency Foster Carers for this child/ren.

16. Signatures

Of Social Worker and Service Manager, signed in ink and dated.

NOT TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH ICS

Appendix 2

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

APPLICATION TO FOSTER

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANTS

CONFIDENTIAL

1. APPLICANT(S) FULL NAMES

Surname: Marital Status

First name(s): D.O.B

First Applicant:

Second Applicant:

Maiden/Previous name(s)

2. Present Address:
(including post code)

Telephone No:

Directions to house:

Period of time in residence:

All previous addresses:
(including postcodes)
(Please continue on a
separate sheet as necessary)

Are you ordinarily resident in Great Britain?

State the address(es) at which you are ordinarily resident:

3.	First applicant	Second applicant
Place of birth:	_____	
Nationality:	_____	
Ethnic Origin:	_____	
Religion (if any):	_____	
Occupation:	_____	
Income (approx. annual Or weekly net income after tax):	_____	

4. Date of marriage: _____

Place of marriage: _____

Details of former marriages (including previous names):
First applicant: _____

Second applicant: _____

5. CHILDREN

(a) Birth/adopted children

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Date of birth</u>	<u>Date of adoption</u>
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(b) Foster children

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Date of birth</u>	<u>Placed by & date</u>
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6. Particulars of any other members of the household:

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
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7. REFERENCES

Name and address of General Medical Practitioner:

First applicant:

Second applicant:

Name and address of two personal referees (not relatives) who will be willing to meet with a Social Worker:

<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Tel. No.</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>How long known</u>
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1.

2.

REFERENCES

8. I/We consent to the County Council acquiring information from Referees, Probation, Police, District Medical Officer, NSPCC, Family Doctor(s), other Local Authorities, Voluntary Agencies, Schools and ex-partners (if applicable) using such information in accordance with statutory regulations.

I/We understand that the County Council need give no reasons in reaching its decision on this application.

Signature of Adults in the Household:

..... Date

..... Date

..... Date

..... Date

FOR OFFICE USE

Date sent for

Date received back

Personal references:

NSPCC:

Health:

CRB/DOH:

Probation:

GP:

Central Database:

Other Local Authorities:

Voluntary Agencies:

Update Report requesting Interim Approval of Family and Friends as Foster Carers for specific named children (Following on from Schedule 3 Report)

The following report must be prepared for Foster Carer Panel to provide panel with sufficient information every time an Emergency Approval or previous Interim Approval is expiring and any further period of approval is sought. This Pro-Forma should only be read in conjunction with the Schedule 3 Emergency Approval Report (Section 5.17, Appendix 1), in order to avoid duplication.

1. Basic Details

List full name(s), address(es) and date(s) of birth of applicants and of the child/ren they are approved to care for, & when the approval was first given.

2. Child/ren's progress in placement to date

Include whether each child is meeting developmental milestones, include each child's Health, Educational and Social needs. Also relationship with each Carer and with each household member eg carers' own children, and the views of family members regarding the placement continuing.

3. Family Structure

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report.

4. Other Household Members

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report.

5. Health

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report.

6. Accommodation

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report. Also describe how the sleeping arrangements are working in practice and be clear what the plans are for the further period of approval sought eg is there any room-sharing? How appropriate is this given the ages of the children?

Longer term approval (ie beyond the initial 4 months) will not be given unless there is sufficient space and privacy in the house for the foster child/ren and all other children of the household (the same standard as would apply to mainstream Fostering applicants)

7. Relationships

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report.

8. Parenting Capacity

Update previous report by commenting specifically on the applicant(s)' parenting/childcare capacity as demonstrated with this child/ren to date. Include his/her skills, competence and potential relevant to his/her capacity to care for this child/ren (including contact needs) if the placement is to continue bearing in mind the

age and changing needs of the child/ren.

9. Involvement with this child/ability to protect

Update on ability to place this child/children's needs and safety above other (eg extended family) loyalties.

Include the up to date views of the applicant(s)' own children (if any) on the proposed placement of this child.

10. Personality and Family Lifestyle

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report.

11. Employment and Interests

Detail changes or additions (if any) to what was stated in the Schedule 3 Report.

12. Statutory Checks and References (on prospective Carer/s and other household members or staying visitors over 16 years)

Provide full details of any checks (eg Criminal Records Bureau) on any household members over 16 that were outstanding at the time of the previous Schedule 3 report. All positive CRB checks (and a risk assessment report) must be passed to the Assistant Director (Children's Social Care) and written permission obtained for proceeding with the application. This should be done prior to panel if at all possible. Two personal references must have been supplied, and a minimum of one interviewed as part of the update report to panel.

13. The Plan for the Child/ren

Update on current and proposed level of contact between child/ren and birth parents/other significant family members. Consider also the evidence regarding the Carer(s)' attitude to contact and ability to facilitate/manage contact as applicable. Summarise the current Social Work Plan for the child/ren and any contingency plan. If the plan is rehabilitation to parents, include anticipated timescales.

14. Plan and Timescales for this Placement

Include the summary outcome of any Looked After Reviews held regarding this child/ren. If the child/ren may need long term care away from his/her parents, include the applicant(s)' current views and willingness to care for the children on a long term basis. Include whether a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order application from these applicants as parties to Care Proceedings (or at a later stage) has been discussed with the applicants, and their considered responses. Indicate your current view as to whether a Residence Order or Special Guardianship Order should be pursued in this case or alternatively whether this child/ren's long term needs would be better met by Permanent Fostering. Residence and Guardianship both offer the applicants some Parental Responsibility and hence can provide greater security and normality in many situations. However, if the nature of the family is such that the applicants would be unable to handle family contacts and pressures from the birth parents or others, Permanent Fostering should be considered. If Permanent Fostering by the applicants is the plan agreed at the 4 month Looked After Review, a full Form F2 assessment for a subsequent panel meeting will be requested from a Fostering

Worker.

15. Recommendations

State clearly whether in your professional opinion the named applicants in their current accommodation and family situation are suitable to be Interim Foster Carers for this child/ren for a further period of time, requesting what you gauge to be an appropriate period of time (in months) in order to enable further work to be completed before returning to panel. Be specific about that work and the timetable for it eg rehabilitation to parents, completion of Care Proceedings, or time required to enable a Residence or Special Guardianship Order application, or to enable a full Fostering assessment.

16. Signatures

Of Social Worker and Service Manager, signed in ink and dated.